

THE LITTLE SPANIARD.

Of all places in the world, Italy is the land of beggars. No one seems to know just why it should be so, but every one who visits Italy very soon realizes that it is; and indeed it always has been.

Italians look upon their beggars as one of the incidental necessities of life; and they have coins so small in value, that one fancies they must have been made expressly to admit of giving something to every beggar without making one's self much poorer.

Strangers look upon the beggars as the one great nuisance of beautiful Italy; but the beggars never seem to think themselves a nuisance. They make it a real artistic profession. They make themselves and their children look so pitiful that one can't help giving them something.

Women will sit, all twisted up, over a basket of worthless fruit which they do not even pretend to sell, and children will hang about them looking like the veriest cripples, when really they are not deformed at all.

Many years ago, in the streets of Florence, there was a little beggar, whose bright face and laughing eyes, even more than what seemed a very twisted body, always attracted attention and alms. He was born in Spain and was known about the streets as "The Little Spaniard."

He had something in him that was not at all satisfied with begging. He couldn't look sad and he couldn't keep limping about. He wanted something to do, and pretty soon he found it. He picked up a piece of white chalk, and with it began to draw pictures on the walls.

An artist saw him at work and, instead of a coin, gave him some bits of colored crayon.

In a day or two the little fellow was drawing colored pictures on the walls, and the pictures were attracting the attention of others, who were not artists and who dropped coins into his hand—more than he had ever received before.

He couldn't go limping about with a cane and a hunched-up shoulder and draw pictures at the same time, but the pictures did better than the limping and pleased the little fellow very much more.

Presently he was one of the straightest, best-formed boys in Florence, and instead of standing at the church doors he was out on the broader streets, where there were smooth sidewalks, or along the Arno, kneeling or lying down when his knees were tired, always working with colored crayons, always attracting the passers-by, till sometimes a crowd would gather to watch him work and see the result; and

still he was known as "The Little Spaniard."

By and by he began copying the faces of those who were looking on, putting their portraits into his pictures, and when the crowd recognized the face a great shout went up, and if the little artist had made a shrewd selection of the one whose face he drew he usually received from him a coin much larger than the little pieces made for beggars.

One day a coach stopped near him, and the crowd fell back on each side, so that the two who were in the coach could see.

The man's face was so strong and bold that it instantly took up every thought in the little artist's mind.

He did not dare to look straight at it, but watched it for a moment from the corners of his eyes, while he finished a prancing horse he was working on.

Then, because he really couldn't have drawn any one else if he had tried, at that moment, quick as his little fingers could move, he drew a man seated on the horse, and the face of the man was the face in the coach.

Before the face was finished a great shout went up from the crowd: "Live the king!" Then "the Little Spaniard" knew whose face he had been drawing, and he was so frightened that he turned and ran.

It was two days before the officers of the king could find him and carry him, frightened almost to death, to the palace.

First the king directed him to draw the face of the queen, that he might see if it was really skill or only that he had learned to draw the king's face and did it on the street in hope of reward. Then he told him he must never do it again, but that he should be given an opportunity to study and do better with his art.

The Little Spaniard studied so earnestly that before long his pictures brought very large sums, and in time he returned to Spain to become one of the three great stars of Spanish art.

Long ago he died, but his name will live as long as art lives, and one of his paintings, to-day, would cost a fortune; but he is still known, in Italy, as "The Little Spaniard," and one is still shown the places where he drew his pictures, with colored crayons, on the street, and where the little made-up cripple begged.—*Henry Willard French.*

THERE is only one stimulant that never fails and yet never intoxicates—Duty. Duty puts a black sky over every man—up in his heart, maybe—into which the skylark, happiness, always goes singing.—*Lamartine.*

GIRLS ON THE FARM.

A few days ago the newspapers published an account of two girls who ran away from their home on a farm because they were tired of its monotonous life and wished to see something of the world. Undoubtedly this is a sample of many similar cases. The lives of women on a farm are often subject to an even greater monotony than those of men. The farmer's sons are out in the fields or off on business to a neighboring village. Occasionally they visit the city. In many families only the eldest son remains to take care of the farm. His brothers leave as soon as they have grown beyond the district school age and go out into the world to seek their fortune. The girls are not similarly favored. In most cases they must center all their interests in their home life. Since this is true, that home life should be made attractive. In this age the most remote household among the hills can keep in touch with the great outlying world by means of newspapers, magazines, and books. The imagination of young women is active and must be fed. Good books will supply this need.

Books alone are not enough, however, to fill the lives of girls on the farm with interest and pleasure. They should have a variety of simple amusements, chief of which should be their association with those of their own and opposite sex. The girls ought to have evenings when they can entertain their friends with games, with pleasant conversation, and a little feast of fruit or nuts and homemade candy. Young people need young society. Young girls are all brighter and better for sensible friendship with young men. The summer should bring the farmer's daughter a multitude of outdoor amusements. A part of the houseyard she should have for her flower garden, another for her tennis or croquet ground. These and other simple pleasures would make her life much nearer an ideal one.

An occasional trip to the nearest town or city would be an important element in her education. Great temptations often arise from a false conception of the outside world. Simplicity and ignorance imagine it to be an enchanted place where dull care is forever banished. Let the daughter on the farm have a chance to see both the light and dark sides of the outer world. If her life is made what it should be she will come back from the crowded streets to the peace and beauty of the country as to her heart's own home.—*New York Press.*

SINCERITY is not Christianity, nor will it take the place of Christianity, and yet it is essential to all Christian service.